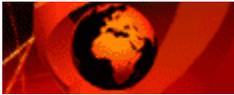


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## Kenya alcoholic brew toll rises

The death toll in the Kenyan alcohol poisoning case has risen to 42, health authorities say.

Fifty-nine other people are in hospital after drinking the illegally produced beverage, which was mixed with methanol to make it stronger.



Some of the victims have gone blind

It was drunk over the past few days in Makutano, south of the capital Nairobi.

Some of those in hospital have lost their sight, while nine others who are critically ill have been transferred to Nairobi's Kenyatta National Hospital.

"In the last few hours, the death toll has now climbed... to 42 dead," Wako Dulacha, medical officer for Machakos district, told the AFP news agency.

"Since Saturday morning, we have been doing our best to save lives, but in some cases it becomes overwhelming. It seems they consumed vast quantities."

### Highly taxed

Kenyan police say they have made several arrests but are still searching for a woman said to have distributed the brew.

One of the victims, Mwoka Musimi, 30, said after one drink he "nearly died".

"I just lost my consciousness. My wife took me to hospital... I'm lucky that I didn't lose my sight or die like my friends."

Some people were found dead in their homes.

Methanol, a poisonous chemical used as a solvent or antifreeze, has been blamed for hundreds of deaths in Kenya in recent years.

In 2000, at least 134 people died and hundreds of others

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were admitted to hospital after drinking poisonous alcohol in Nairobi.

The unlicensed manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol is illegal in Kenya, but the trade in cheap brews is widespread because they offer a much cheaper way of getting drunk than highly taxed legal beers and spirits.

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